

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

ALOHA TOWER

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

PIER 9, HONOLULU HARBOR

CITY, TOWN

HONOLULU

STATE

HAWAII

VICINITY OF
CODE

15

1st

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

HONOLULU

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Department of Transportation, Harbors Division, State of Hawaii

STREET & NUMBER

869 Punchbowl Street

CITY, TOWN

Honolulu

VICINITY OF

Hawaii

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bureau of Conveyances

STREET & NUMBER

403 South Queen Street

CITY, TOWN

Honolulu

Hawaii

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Hawaii Register of Historic Places

DATE June, 1973

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Honolulu

STATE

Hawaii

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A 184-foot, ten storied, concrete tower. Best described as a "modernistic" interpretation of a Gothic tower with its accentuated vertical lines terminating at each corner in square pylons with vertical slot, arched windows, arched lintels, and convex curved pointed hip roofs of stucco finish. Projecting above the corner roofs is a higher roof of similar form terminating with a pedestal form of "widows walk" with wrought iron hand rail. At each side of the central roof is a stuccoed dormer similar in form to the corner pylon windows with small gable roofs. The highest point is a mast with a cross arm at the top and various cables which are used to hang signals to transmit information to ships in or near the harbor. At the tenth floor level a projecting observation balcony with the legend "ALOHA" in large block letters is incised in the parapet walls. The exterior surface is painted white.

The Aloha Tower remains as an important architectural element in the Honolulu skyline and represents the warm welcome and atmosphere the people of Hawaii have always maintained for visitors from across the sea.

Offices are located on all floors. The tenth floor has a projecting observation balcony and the room is mainly open with a central kiosk containing tourist information. There is also a small office in which the harbor pilot works. A radiotelephone is enclosed in this office. Offices are reached by both stair and elevator with three windows on each side connected by a vertical band. The flooring throughout is linoleum tile.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1926, 1941, 1947

BUILDER/ARCHITECT NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
ARTHUR REYNOLDS, ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Aloha Tower was at one time the tallest and most prominent building in Honolulu. It is a symbol of Hawaii's investment in tourism and a reminder of the time when sea travel was the main link with the rest of the world. It was a center for the planning of military convoy operations during World War II.

In 1925, the uncompleted Aloha Tower was the center of a fierce little controversy involving the public, the Board of Harbor Commissioners, and the Territorial Legislature. Some wanted no tower at all, some wanted a ten-story structure, while others favored a compromise seven-story building. After several months of debate, the issue was settled in the legislature in favor of the ten-story advocates.

When the tower was finally completed and turned over to the Board of Harbor Commissioners in June, 1926, it was the pride of the islands. It was by far the most imposing building in the territory and offered a spectacular view of Honolulu and its harbor. Then as now, it housed various offices, including the Harbor Master's. The tenth floor was an observatory and also housed a lookout station for the harbor pilots. Vessels calling at Honolulu could see the tower's brilliant white profile from as far as fifteen miles out. For thousands of tourists arriving by ship, it was a symbol of welcome, while for local citizens, an indicator of their ties with the sea and of the importance of sea transportation to Hawaii's economy. Before the advent of trans-Pacific aircraft, it was the landmark in Honolulu's waterfront area.

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Immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States Navy took over control of Aloha Tower. Access to all but authorized persons was denied, and the landmark was patrolled constantly by armed sentries. This control did not relax even after the war ended, and the continuing military occupation of the tower became the object of complaint from local citizens. Before a full-scale controversy developed, the United States Coast Guard, who utilized the tower under the authority of the U. S. Navy, relinquished its control on December 20, 1947.

The reason for the wartime secrecy was that the tower had been a control facility for military convoy shipping for the Pacific Theater of Operations. Many of the convoys that supported the various island invasions were formed in Honolulu under the control of the Aloha Tower offices.

In 1947, the green camouflage paint was sandblasted from the tower and the brilliant white paint replaced. Once again, Aloha Tower welcomed visitors arriving aboard cruise ships also recently released from military control. However, it was not long before the emphasis in travel shifted from passenger vessels to aircraft. Before long, a passenger ship in Honolulu Harbor became an unusual sight.

Aloha Tower still stands to welcome visitors, however, and the Harbor pilots still carry out their watch over the activities below. Recently, the tower became the main terminal for a new inter-island hydrofoil commuter vessel system.

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Aloha Tower is a reminder to all people of the hospitable nature of the fiftieth State, and it is a symbol of a day when travel was more than going from one point to another, but an adventure in grace and comfort.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Honolulu Advertiser, May 20, 1926; May 29, 1926; May 30, 1926; May 31, 1926; August 28, 1945; December 28, 1945; May 8, 1947.
Honolulu Star-Bulletin, June 28, 1926; September 13, 1945; January 21, 1948; March 20, 1960; October 15, 1961
Historic Buildings Task Force, Old Honolulu (Honolulu, 1970), 51.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one

UTM REFERENCES

A 04 6 17 40 10 25 56 9 20
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gary T. Cummins, Director

ORGANIZATION

Hawaii Register of Historic Places

STREET & NUMBER

DLNR, Box 621

CITY OR TOWN

Honolulu

August 12, 1975
DATE

808-548-7460
TELEPHONE

Honolulu
STATE

Hawaii 96809

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer, Hawaii

DATE October 20, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER